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NSC BRIEFING

17 February 1954

COMMUNISM IN LATIN AMERICA

I. Topic will receive some attention at  
10th Inter-American Conference -  
Caracas - 1 March.

II. Increased Communist interest in Latin  
America over past two years.

A. Activity of Soviet and Satellite  
missions.

25X1

1. Credentials presented in eight  
countries, in addition to five  
existing missions in Argentina,  
Uruguay, Brazil, Ecuador, and  
Mexico.

2. Trade pact between Argentina  
and USSR may stimulate others.

B. Increase in Latin American travel  
behind Iron Curtain - Communist  
subsidized.

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1. 900 Latin Americans last six months 1953.
2. Greatly increased Latin American representation at international Communist meetings WFTU, in Vienna, October - 160. World Youth Festival, Bucharest, August - 600.
3. Attendance at nine front organization conferences in 1953 with travel in Orbit countries.

C. Communist leaders trained or visiting in Moscow or Orbit in 1953.

1. Secretaries General of four parties and one other top party official.
2. Other Communist present or potential leaders also in Orbit.

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3. European Communist leaders have in return visited Communist or front conferences in Latin America.
4. Communist training schools and programs reactivated or begun.

III. Communist influence varies - negligible only in Dominican Republic or Haiti.

A. Guatemala. Influence Arbenz, control labor, dominate agrarian reform.

1. Increased voting strength in January 1953 and December 1953 elections.
2. Party strength up from 500 to 3,000 in 1953.
3. Opposition divided.

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B. Brazil.

1. Party recruitment broadened under "united national front."
  - a. Membership up from 65,000 to 110,000 in 1953.
2. Strength growing in organized labor.
  - a. Labor minister using Communists to build own machine.

C. Chile.

1. Increasing strength in organized labor from rising inflation.
2. Communist influence energetic in nitrate fields, coal mines, copper workers' federation.
3. Influence in workingmen's newspapers.

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IV. At Caracas.

A. US resolutions want controls on  
Communist propaganda and inter-  
national travel.

1. Most Latin American governments  
do not see Communism as threat  
connected with Soviet Union.

B. Most Latin American governments will  
vote for resolution condemning Com-  
munism.

1. Little interest.  
2. Greater interest in economic  
problems and colonialism.  
3. Fear giving impression of inter-  
vening in Guatemalan affairs.

a. Sensitive because of  
Guatemalan charges (29 Jan-  
uary) implying US would approve  
armed attack by Latin Ameri-  
can governments on Arbenz  
regime.

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